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IRAN'S HARDLINE PRESIDENT RAISI KILLED IN HELICOPTER CRASH

Ebrahim Raisi and foreign minister Hossein Amirabdollahian were found dead on Monday morning, hours after their helicopter crashed

A CONFIDANT OF SUPREME LEADER KHAMENEI

They were returning from the Azerbaijan border after inaugurating a dam. The crash happened in the Jolfa region of Iran's East Azerbaijan province amid poor weather conditions. Raisi, who was close to supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, took power in 2021. His tenure has seen Iran rocked by mass protests amid an economic crisis deepened by US sanctions

ONE-DAY STATE MOURNING IN INDIA TODAY

- Iran's first Vice President Mohammad Mokhber was appointed as acting president on Monday. Mokhber has held top posts within the country's power structure, especially in its influential charitable foundations
- A one-day state mourning will be observed across India on Tuesday as a mark of respect for Raisi, the Union home ministry announced | P9, P12

June 28

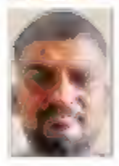
WHEN IRAN WILL HOLD PRESIDENTIAL POLLS TO ELECT RAISI'S SUCCESSOR

CHENNAI • MADURAI • VIJAYAWADA • BENGALURU • KOCHI • HYDERABAD • VISAKHAPATNAM • COIMBATORE • KOZHIKODE • THIRUVANANTHAPURAM • BELAGAVI • BHUBANESWAR • SHIVAMOGGA • MANGALURU • TIRUPATI • TIRUCHY • TIRUNELVELI • SAMBALPUR • HUBBALLI • DHARMAPURI • KOTTAYAM • KANNUR • VILLUPURAM • KOLLAM • TADEPALLIGUDEM • NAGAPATTINAM • THRISSUR • KALABURAGI

Guj police nab 4 IS men from Lanka with plans to attack India

DILIP SINGH KSHATRIYA @ Ahmedabad

FOUR alleged Islamic State-affiliated terrorists from Sri Lanka, who had come to India to carry out terror attacks, were arrested by the Gujarat Anti-Terrorist Squad (ATS) at the Vallabhbhai Patel International Airport in Ahmedabad on Monday, days before the city is to host two key IPL matches.



(From top) Mohammad Nusrat, Mohammad Nafran, Mohammad Rasdeen, and Mohammad Faris

As per the police, the four arrived in Chennai from Colombo on Sunday. Subsequently, they traveled to Ahmedabad on an Indigo flight. "The ATS received a tip-off about the arrival of four terrorists by air or rail on May 18 and 19. Under discreet surveillance, they were apprehended at the (Ahmedabad) airport," Gujarat Director General of Police (DGP) Vikas Sahay said.

The four were being handled by one Abu Bakar al-Baghdadi, based in Pakistan, who had given them four lakh Sri Lankan rupees to fund the operation. Abu Bakar encouraged them to carry out terrorist activities in India, to which they agreed, and even showed readiness to carry out suicide bombings, Sahay claimed.

Based on the geo-coordinates and photographs found on their mobile phones, the ATS team recovered three Pakistan-made pistols and 20 cartridges lying abandoned at a location in the city's Nana Chiloda area. "Their Pakistani handler had stashed the weapons at this location for the accused to use in terrorist acts," Sahay said. A flag of the Islamic State was also found at the location, he said. A case has been registered under sections of the Unlawful Activities Prevention Act (UAPA), Indian Penal Code (IPC), and Arms Act, 1959 and the probe is on.

A first-time voter with her grandma in Aska, Odisha | SUBHAM QUARESHY

60% turnout in 5th phase of polls

Baramulla polling at 59%, an all-time record

PREETHA NAIR @ New Delhi

THE fifth phase of the Lok Sabha polls on Monday registered a 60.48% voter turnout at 11 pm, slowing closing in on the 61.82% tally for the same seats in 2019. With 49 seats across eight states and Union Territories voting, the fifth phase had the fewest seats in the seven-phase elections, which began on April 19. This phase wrapped up Lok Sabha polls in Maharashtra and Ladakh.

According to the Election Commission, Baramulla in J&K recorded a voter turnout of 59%. It is the highest-ever polling percentage in the constituency since 1984. Baramulla had witnessed a fierce three-cornered fight between National Conference Vice President Omar Abdullah, People's Conference President Sajad Gani Lone and jailed head of the Awami Ittehad Party (AIP) Sheikh Abdul Rashid alias Engineer Rashid. In 1984, Baramulla had recorded a turnout of 58.90%.

DECIDE

Ladakh, too, registered a record voter turnout of 68.47% till 8 pm. This is the first major electoral battle in the region after it was carved out of J&K and granted Union territory status in 2019.

Of the 49 seats in the fifth phase, the BJP had pocketed 32 in the 2019 Lok Sabha elections.

The most watched would be the 14 seats in Uttar Pradesh, seven in West Bengal, and 13 in Maharashtra. All eyes are on UP's Rae Bareli and Amethi, where Congress leader Rahul Gandhi and his family loyalist K L Sharma are in the fray. Rahul was fielded in Rae Bareli after his mother Sonia Gandhi moved to the Rajya Sabha. In Amethi, Sharma is facing off against incumbent BJP MP Smriti Irani. The fifth phase is crucial for the Congress as the BJP had won 13 of the 14 seats going to polls barring Rae Bareli.

In Maharashtra, 10 seats out of 13 witnessed a pitched battle between the two factions of the Shiv Sena. Voting in five seats in Bihar, three in Jharkhand and five in Odisha were also held. West Bengal recorded a turnout of 73.14%. Key candidates include Piyush Goyal, Bharati Pawar, Rajnath Singh, and Chirag Paswan.

Three Chautalas vie for Hisar LS seat

HARPREET BAJWA @ Chandigarh

HIGH drama is unfolding in Haryana's Hisar Lok Sabha constituency, where three members of the influential Chautala family are locked in a multi-cornered fight. Two are *bahus* (daughters-in-law) while the third is a *chacha-sasur* (uncle-in-law).

Indian National Lok Dal candidate Sunaina Chautala, wife of Ravi Chautala who is the son of INLD supremo Om Prakash Chautala's younger brother late Pratap Singh Chautala, is pitted against Jannayak Janta Party (JJP)'s Naina Chautala, wife of JJP chief Ajay Singh Chautala, another son of Om Prakash Chautala. And taking on both of them is BJP's Ranjit Singh Chautala, who is none other than the brother of Om Prakash Chautala.

SHOWTIME FOR GLADIATORS

While the three close relatives are fighting among themselves, the Congress has fielded three-time MP Jai Prakash as its candidate.

Although the three Chautalas have been following separate political paths, this is the first time they are contesting from the same seat.

Naina, 57, is the mother of ex-Haryana deputy CM Dushyant Chautala while Sunaina, 47, is the general secretary of INLD's women's wing.

Ranjit, 78, son of former deputy prime minister Devi Lal, is an independent MLA who joined the BJP recently.

Sunaina Chautala (left), Ranjit Singh Chautala, and Naina Chautala

While the Chautala family contest has evoked much curiosity, the candidates are unfazed. "It is not a family war but a battle of principles," says Sunaina, adding: "The main issues we are focusing on are inflation, unemployment, and water crisis."

Naina, a two-time MLA, is credited with holding statewide all-women rallies to create political awareness among women. She believes her rapport with women voters will swing the result in her favour.

However, Ranjit asserts the BJP is poised to win all the 10 Lok Sabha seats in Haryana, just like last time, on the back of the Modi wave.

As for Congress' Prakash, he claims he has better connect with the people. In 1989, he had won the Hisar LS seat as a Janata Dal candidate and served as Union Minister. In 1996, he again won from Hisar on Haryana Vikas Party ticket. Later, he joined the Congress and got elected as the Hisar MP in 2004.

No one from K'taka will become PM: Siddu

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Bengaluru

CHIEF Minister Siddaramaiah on Monday said no one from Karnataka will become Prime Minister. "At the Centre, INDIA bloc will come to power and we will discuss and decide who should be the Prime Minister based on the implementation of programmes," he said, responding to a question on I.N.D.I.A's PM candidate. The response indirectly implies that even AICC chief Mallikarjun Kharge is not a PM candidate. The CM said there is no Gujarat model, but after Karnataka implemented its guarantee schemes, there is only a Karnataka model now. P4

EXPRESS READ

Bail for Revanna in sexual harassment case

Bengaluru: A special court on Monday granted bail to Holenarasipur JDS MLA HD Revanna in a sexual harassment case. The case was registered on April 28 at the Holenarasipur Town police station | P4

Hiring pvt taxi from KIA to B'luru? Be ready to pay more

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Bengaluru

IN a move that could shoot up the fare for flyers coming to the city from the Kempegowda International Airport, a fee of Rs 150 has been introduced from Monday morning for private taxis (yellow board ones) that enter the Arrivals area to pick up passengers from the airport.

This fee is minimum and valid only up to 7 minutes. Drivers will have to pay Rs 300 for the next seven minutes. There are no charges for personal vehicles for a maximum of 7 minutes, but they too have to pay Rs 150 if this duration is exceeded (till the 14th minute). The charges have come into immediate effect at both KIA terminals. Angry and shocked private taxi operators, who operate an average of 15,000 trips to the airport daily, are planning a major protest on the airport premises on Wednesday.

The move will not impact those arriving by cab aggregator taxis like Ola or Uber as they have separate parking spaces inside the airport. However, if these taxis enter the Arrivals zone to scout for passengers, they also have to pay.

A source from Bangalore International Airport Ltd, said the charges have been announced on its website. The idea behind it is to decongest the space in both terminals which are completely taken over by cabs. P2

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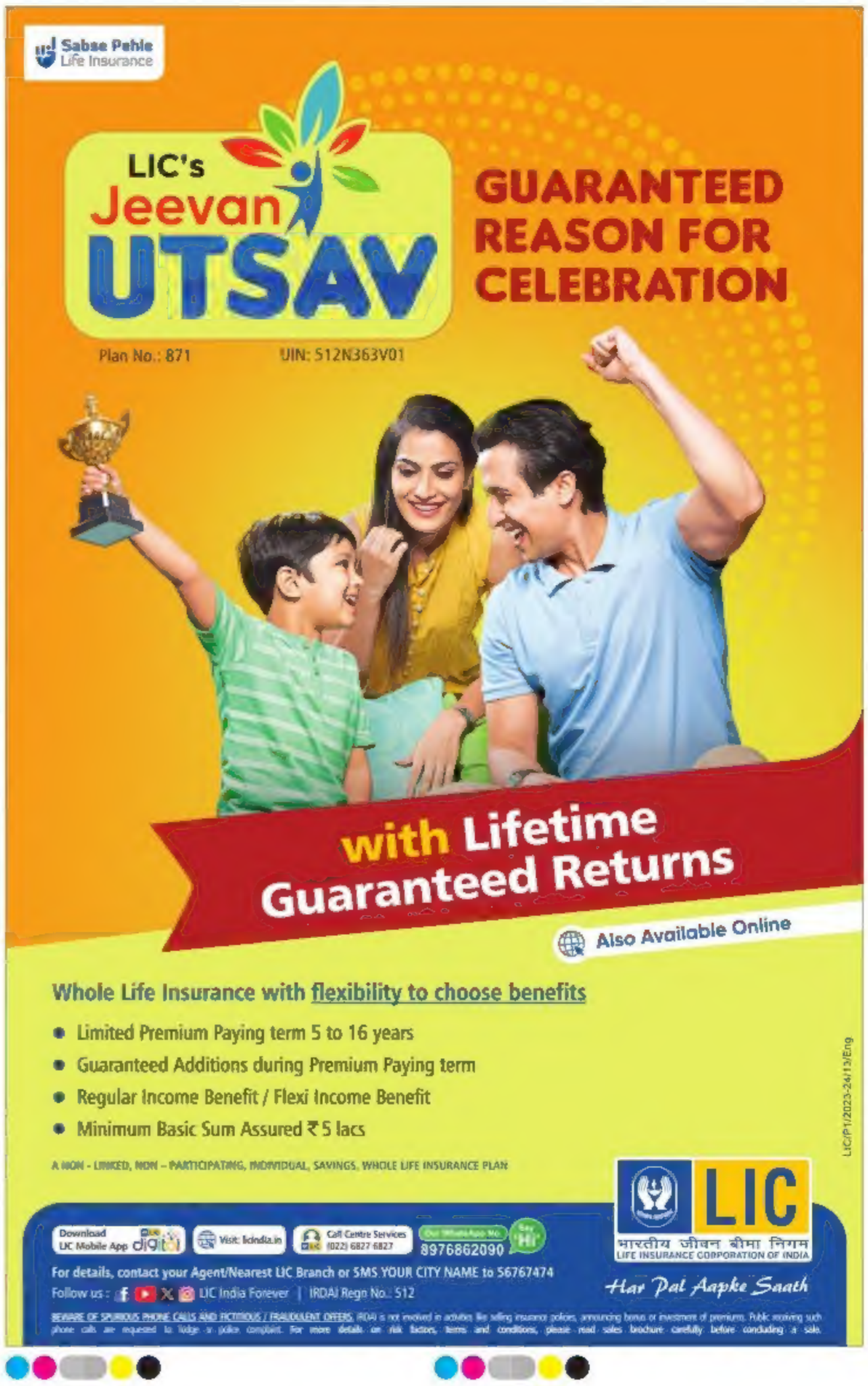
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